

PROFESSOR HELLE PORSDAM: A DISTINCTIVE INSIGHT ON AMERICAN CULTURE AND THE LAW

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge my colleagues to take notice of the work of a talented Danish scholar, Professor Helle Porsdam of Denmark's Odense University. Dr. Porsdam's book, *Legally Speaking: Contemporary American Culture and the Law*, which was recently published by the University of Massachusetts Press, offers evidence of her extraordinary perceptiveness in her analysis of American culture.

In *Legally Speaking*, Dr. Porsdam discusses the social impact of the law in the United States. Whereas many European and Asian nations find symbols of their national identity in royalty or an established church, Americans look to an institution far more consistent with our egalitarian roots: our system of justice. Despite our frequent frustrations with the legal profession—ambulance-chasing lawyers, legal “sharks,” frivolous lawsuits, the O.J. Simpson trial—the law epitomizes our most cherished civil ideals of fairness and equality. When a citizen is wronged, we look to the courts to make things right. When a crime is committed, the courts offer our sole vehicle for judgment and punishment. When our rights are violated, our courts can restore them. For this reason, Dr. Porsdam contends, the law serves more than just a functional purpose for the American people: it is a “civil religion” in which we place a particular kind of faith. The courts arbitrate more than just lawsuits and criminal cases; they pass judgment on our hopes and dreams as well.

Dr. Porsdam's book analyzes America's moral investment in the legal system, and it further demonstrates how this facet of our national identity has permeated our culture. From *The People's Court* to *L.A. Law*, from Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* to Scott Turow's *Presumed Innocent*, the evidence of our society's attraction to judicial institutions is overwhelming. Dr. Porsdam carefully and thoughtfully explores the connections between the allure of the law and our faith in it.

The perceptiveness of Dr. Porsdam in *Legally Speaking* has earned the endorsement of scholars across our country. Lewis D. Sargentich of Harvard Law School noted that the book is “full of valuable insight.” Her “emphasis on the symbolic, unifying, aspirational side of law in American life, and her showing of this aspect of law through a close look at a series of contemporary ‘cultural texts,’ combine to produce a unique scholarly contribution.” Maxwell H. Bloomfield, the author of *American Lawyers in a Changing Society*, was equally effusive, praising Dr. Porsdam's work as “an innovative and engaging study exploring the pervasive influence of law in the shaping of contemporary American culture. It is a strikingly original piece of work for which no comparable models exist.”

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with these distinguished scholars. I urge my colleagues to join me in reading *Legally Speaking*

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ing and in appreciating the brilliant observations of Dr. Helle Porsdam.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, March 8, 2000, I was on a plane returning from my district and was unable to attend votes. Had I been here I would have made the following votes: Rollcall Nos. 29—“aye”; 30—“aye”; 31—“aye”; 32—“aye”; and 33—“aye”.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BROOKLYN CHINESE-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION'S TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association (BCA) in honor of its Twelfth Anniversary.

An ancient Chinese proverb states: “If you want 1 year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people” Twelve years ago, the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association did just that. The Association started out as a small, social services agency with a mission to provide assistance to the growing Asian-American community in Sunset Park, Borough Park and Bay Ridge sections of Brooklyn.

Since then, the Asian-American community has seen tremendous growth and recent estimates show that more than 200,000 people of Asian descent now live throughout the borough. As a result, Sunset Park and its surrounding neighborhoods are commonly known as “Brooklyn Chinatown.”

BCA has expanded throughout the years to meet the growing need of Asian-Americans by providing day care and senior centers, with a main community center and ten other service sites in Sunset Park, Borough Park, Bay Ridge, Sheepshead Bay and Bensonhurst.

Through its programs and services, BCA provides assistance to more than 800 individuals a day. Stepping into a new Millennium and its thirteenth year of community services, offering a wide array of new programs including comprehensive bilingual social services and other programs to meet the growing challenges in this new century.

What started out as a small agency has flourished into the largest community-based, multi-human services community development organization, providing assistance to Asian-Americans throughout the borough of Brooklyn as well as other parts of the city.

I congratulate BCA on its Twelfth Anniversary and wish the Association continued prosperity as it offers members of the Asian-American community guidance today, tomorrow and into the future.

March 13, 2000

HONORING VETERANS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WAR

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, recently, the House of Representatives joined together in a bipartisan fashion to pass House Joint Resolution 86, legislation recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Korean war and commending the bravery and patriotism of the 5.72 million men and women who fought bravely in that conflict. I have spoken with many New Jerseyans who served in the Korean war, and I can tell you, this tribute is long overdue.

Too often we hear the Korean war referred to as the “forgotten war,” because it was sandwiched between this Nation's victory in World War II and the Vietnam war. Because of that, the over 55,000 men and women who lost their lives in the Korean war, and those who served, sometimes do not receive the recognition and gratitude that they are owed. I am hopeful that Congress' passage of this legislation will serve as a first step towards reversing that gross inequity.

Victory during World War II signaled the beginning of a world where the United States shouldered the role of undisputed leader of the free world. America was the only democratic power capable of responding to the spreading advances of communism when North Korea commenced its attack on the south. With the aid of the Soviet Union and China, North Korea thought they would swiftly and easily unite the Korean peninsula under communist rule. Only through the blood and sacrifice of men in a thousand dark battles, was the tide turned and freedom restored.

The determination that America showed in Korea set in motion the events that ultimately led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of Soviet communism. By standing up for freedom and democracy in South Korea we sent a clear message that where democracy was threatened, the United States would stand firm. Here in Washington, DC, the inscription at the Korean Memorial reminds us that “freedom is not free,” and that the young American men and women who have been willing to pay the price for freedom are owed a tremendous debt of gratitude. We must remember their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, the brave men and women who served in the Korean war fought not for personal gain, but rather to insure freedom for all generations to come. We must not forget what their blood bought. I hope my colleagues will join with me to honor and call attention to our nation's Korean war veterans.

MILITARY RECRUITERS SHOULD BE WELCOME IN HIGH SCHOOLS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member highly commends and submits for the RECORD

an editorial from the March 7, 2000, Norfolk Daily News expressing concern that some public high schools do not cooperate with military recruiters while allowing universities and colleges on campus. High school students should have a full range of postsecondary options presented to them, in order to make an informed decision about life after high school.

[From the Daily News, Mar. 7, 2000]

COOPERATION IS IMPORTANT DUTY—RECRUITERS DESERVE WELCOME FROM ALL OF NATION'S PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

Members of the Senate Armed Services Personnel subcommittee heard testimony recently that many high schools refuse to cooperate with military recruiters. It is important for members of Congress to find out why this is so, and whether a more cooperative attitude can be encouraged.

With the Army, Navy and Air Force falling short of their recruitment goals in the past year and new peacekeeping demands being put on U.S. forces, it is important that enlistments in the all volunteer force be encouraged.

Much is being done to improve pay and benefits, to improve military housing and shorten long tours of foreign duty. Provision of enlistment incentives that include funds for later college training has helped the services and the educational institutions as well.

In this free society, it may not be possible to do much about some people described by Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Green, an Army Reserve recruiter in Los Angeles. She told the Senate subcommittee that when visiting one of the high schools in her recruiting area, she is regularly greeted by parents who protest her presence.

Recruiters from each of the services agreed that about half of the schools bar military representatives and also refuse access to student directories that would allow correspondence with prospective enlistees. By contrast, the recruiters noted, colleges that seek to recruit high school students get full cooperation.

It is a difference in treatment that should not exist. Public high schools have a special burden to ensure their graduates the broadest possible career opportunities. Military service is an important option, and each of the branches ought to be welcomed to career days or any other similar events.

Sen. Charles Robb, D-Va., a member of the subcommittee that heard testimony from the recruiters, suggested that legislation be considered to provide some inducement for schools to cooperate with recruiters.

A different approach could be in order. With federal money playing an increasing, though still minor, role in public education, Washington ought not consider more rewards for cooperating but impose funding cuts for failure to do so. That would get more attention.

While little is said these days about patriotic duties and an obligation all Americans have to help protect the nation from overt aggression and terrorists, a fundamental duty of citizenship needs to include support of the nation's military services.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF PROCEED'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY AND MS. HAYDEE LOPEZ FOR 25 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE ORGANIZATION

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize PROCEED on its 30th Anniversary and Ms. Haydee Lopez on her retirement after twenty-five years of service and commitment to the organization.

Based in Elizabeth, New Jersey, PROCEED has assisted the underprivileged in the City of Elizabeth and Union County through comprehensive programs since 1970. As the organization prepares to celebrate this milestone, it is also honoring the accomplishments and dedication of Ms. Haydee Lopez, a woman who defines the vision and the promise of the organization.

Joining PROCEED in 1975, Ms. Lopez served as both the force and the heart behind the organization. Described as a leader, an optimist, and a believer, Ms. Lopez always set the standard at PROCEED, never hesitating to purchase supplies or necessities for clients with her own resources, or to work for "gratis" when the budget faced a financial crisis.

Ms. Lopez has served the Hispanic community, the constituents of PROCEED, and her fellow workers with pride, devotion, and professionalism. Whether acting in her capacity as Executive Secretary, Acting Executive Director, or Financial Officer, Ms. Lopez always made those around her feel that they were valued.

Ms. Lopez is happily married and the mother of two children and four grandchildren. She was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and moved to Elizabeth in 1970.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating PROCEED on its 30th anniversary and to thank Ms. Haydee Lopez for her unyielding dedication to the Elizabeth community. All of your efforts on behalf of PROCEED are truly remarkable and I wish you a happy retirement.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it's time for a minimum wage increase, it's time to help family businesses.

We are playing out the next round of inappropriate tax cuts, this time under the guise of helping minimum wage workers. A discussion on the minimum wage and small business taxes is appropriate. We must increase the minimum wage so that it at least keeps up with inflation. We can provide tax assistance to those who need it. But the two efforts should not be linked. This is a political exercise that guarantees that nothing will pass. It invites a veto.

A two-year minimum wage bill would pass and swiftly become law. Oregon's experience has shown that you can have healthy economic growth and a higher minimum wage. As Oregon's wage rate was phased in from 1997 to 1999, 57,000 welfare recipients found jobs, a 33% reduction in the total welfare caseload. Total unemployment in our state has dropped from 6% to 4.7% since Oregon's wage rate increased to \$6.50 an hour over a year ago, to become the highest minimum wage in the nation.

I am eager to work for tax reform for those who need it most: closely-held businesses, farms and woodlots. The Democratic alternative would increase the current \$1.3 million estate tax exclusion to a \$4 million per family exclusion. We could pass this kind of targeted tax bill tomorrow, but we can and should do more. The current estate tax often forces sale of assets, cutting of timber or even sale of the business itself to pay the tax. We should permanently exempt closely-held family businesses and farms from estate taxes so long as the assets stay within the family or the same closely-held ownership.

The Republican tax bill does not target those who need the most help. Only 1/6 of the benefits go to "small business." The majority of taxpayers would only see about a \$4 tax cut. Worse, the Republican tax bill commits over a hundred billion dollars in tax breaks without a budget and without guaranteed protections for Medicare and Social Security. This is a dangerous game.

I urge the Republican leadership to stop playing politics. Don't force a bill that doesn't stand a chance of being enacted into law. Give Congress the chance to vote a fair minimum wage increase up or down. Allow a proposal to help family businesses and farms to stay in the family. These are two proposals the American people support and deserve.

ORANGE COUNTY SPIKERS SENIOR VOLLEYBALL TEAM

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 13, 2000

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to congratulate the Orange County Spikers Seniors Volleyball Team for winning the bronze medal at the U.S. National Senior Olympics in Orlando, Florida. The Spikers were the only 55 and older team representing the State of California to be invited to participate in this event. I commend them for all of their hard work and dedication.

This team was formed two years ago, and has since won every Southern California Senior Olympics Tournament in Orange County, San Diego, Palm Springs, and Los Angeles.

Their valiant performance serves as a wonderful example for exercising seniors. As an avid sports fan, I appreciate hearing the exciting news and cannot wait to learn of future Spikers' successes and achievements.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge each team player. The Spikers' roster includes manager, Harold Shiffer; coach Jim Godfrey; and players Gale Kinell, Allen